

# ROTARY CONNECTION

WINTER 2022

## MEMBER PROFILES



**TARA GRAYS - Member since 2018**

Tara is the current Treasurer of the Rotary Club and Assistant Vice President, Business Relationship Manager, at State Bank of Cross Plains

specializing in commercial banking. In 2021 she was a Woman of the Year Candidate for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and in 2022 she was among In Business magazine's class of "40 Under 40." Tara is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.



**ANITA MAHAMED, CPA & CFP - Member since 2016**

Anita is a partner at the accounting firm Wipfli LLP leading the southern Wisconsin construction and real estate market practice.

She is Treasurer of Rotary District 6250, Past-President of the Board of Directors of Domestic Abuse Intervention Services (DAIS), and she serves as Treasurer and a member of the Board of Directors of Downtown Madison Inc. (DMI). Anita is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Business.



**OSCAR MIRELES - Member since 2013**

For 28 years Oscar has been the executive director of Omega School which helps adults prepare for, and obtain, a GED/HSED credential.

He is a member of the boards of directors of Friends of PBS and the Overture Center. In 2016, Oscar was selected the 6th Poet Laureate of the City of Madison. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and was recently named a 2022 Distinguished Alumni Award recipient.



## SERVICE

## ROTARY ENGAGING OUR YOUTH IN ETHICAL THINKING

On February 3, 2023, the Rotary Club of Madison will host its 21st annual Rotary Ethics Symposium for over 200 high school juniors from Dane County high schools. The event will be held at Monona Terrace from 8:30 am-2:00 pm, and over 60 members of our Rotary Club will volunteer at the event.

This symposium engages students in thinking about and discussing ethical dilemmas that many face on any given day. What they learn at the all-day event is thought-provoking and will help provide guidance to them in dealing with ethical dilemmas for the rest of their lives.

The annual program is free to participants and is underwritten by a grant from the Madison Rotary Foundation. During the 5-1/2-hour event, students meet in small groups that

include their peers from across the district. This cross-section of their community ensures that these juniors will encounter perspectives and experiences differing from their own. Each dilemma is structured so that there are no right or wrong answers and teaches both ethical thinking and civil discourse. Students come together at the end of the day to talk about what they learned.

Students involved in previous Symposiums have said this about the event:

*"This introduced me to a whole new way of thinking. Thanks for opening up my mind."* and *"I was impressed by how open people were to listening to others. It makes me optimistic and hopeful as we get ready to become the leaders of this nation."*

*Are you a community leader who is interested in taking part in transformational change in your community, making an impact around the world, and expanding your personal and professional network? If so, contact us.*

## SUPPORTING AND CONNECTING TO OUR FUTURE

By *JESSIKA KASTEN* — Member since 2019

Brian Espinoza was talking with his high school guidance counselor when he first learned of the Rotary Scholarship Program. “My counselor nominated me for the Rotary Scholarship Program. That was transformational,” said Brian. He was awarded a four-year Rotary scholarship and attended Edgewood College where he completed his degree in marketing last May. “The financial assistance is a huge benefit, but I have learned that everyone needs additional help, support and advice to be successful,” he said. “That’s why I’m so grateful to the mentor who was assigned to me as part of the Rotary Scholarship Program.” Brian and his mentor, Ron Luskin, were in close contact throughout his college career and still maintain that strong connection today. “Ron got to know me, understood my goals and ultimately connected me with a banker and community leader. I was offered an internship that paved the way to my first professional job,” said Brian.

Each year, the Rotary Scholarship Program distributes over \$380,000 in four-year college scholarship assistance through the Madison



Rotary Foundation. Participating Madison high schools submit candidates from which awards are based on outstanding character and leadership, a deep sense of obligation to their community, academic success and financial need. Plus, nearly every scholar has a Rotary mentor. “The importance of giving back to my community is engrained in me. Now that I’ve graduated college, I’m thinking about how I can find ways to participate in Rotary,” said Brian. “I’d like to take this experience full circle.”

## THE IDEA OF SERVICE AS A WORTHY ENTERPRISE

By *LINDA O’HERN* — Member since 1992

As we know, the war in Ukraine is having devastating consequences. According to the United Nations, more than 5 million people, most of them women and children, have sought refuge in neighboring countries and across Europe, while about 7 million more people have been displaced within Ukraine.

Rotary and Rotaract clubs in Europe and around the world have taken action and are working to provide food, water, medical equipment, and shelter for refugees. Because of our generous contributions, the Rotary International Foundation received more than \$15 million in gifts for disaster response. A \$5,000 contribution was made by the Rotary Club of Madison.

Shown here, Rotarians and other volunteers pack supplies at a warehouse in Zamosc, Poland, approximately 60km (27 miles) from the Ukraine border. Zamosc is a major hub for people displaced by the conflict and a centralized coordination location for aid from clubs in Europe. The Rotary Club of Zamosc Ordynacki rents a warehouse



where daily shipments of food, water, clothing, blankets, and medical supplies are sorted and prepared for transport throughout Ukraine.

Additionally, the European Rotaract Information Centre created a United for Peace site that compiles information for refugees and volunteers. Information is offered about free rail, bus, and air transportation for refugees. The site also facilitates coordination of shelter for refugees stranded at the border. Volunteer hosts can sign up through an online form and specify how many people they can house and for how long.



## CLUB INFORMATION

The Rotary Club of Madison was chartered in 1913, and we are proud of our 100+ years of service to Madison and beyond. We are one of the 10 largest of over 46,000 Rotary clubs in the world with 420 members.



CONNECT. GROW. SERVE.

- **Connect** with other leaders to expand your network
- **Grow** personally and professionally
- **Serve** and help shape our community, our world and our future

### EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS.

Through Rotary you will meet people from all backgrounds. Rotary has 1.4 million members worldwide. Not only will you make valuable connections, but you will be introduced to new interests and ideas you may not otherwise experience. We offer informative programs at our weekly luncheon meetings on various local, national and international topics.

### CREATE CHANGE.

We participate in many hands-on service opportunities. You can help shape our community and our future. We focus on three key areas: Basic Needs, Education and Civic Engagement. With Rotary, you'll be able to make a difference in the areas closest to your heart.

### MAKE AN IMPACT.

It's people like you who make up the heart of this city—people who promote change and take steps to make it happen. You'll evolve both personally and professionally by connecting with people from every sector.

In Rotary, our purpose is simple: join together to accomplish greatness—greatness for ourselves, our community and our world.



## ROTARY COMMUNITY GRANTS TRANSFORM LIVES

By JANET PIRAINO — Member since 2012

Every year since 1937, contributions from Downtown Madison Rotarians have made an incredible difference in the lives of area residents through the club's Community Grants initiative. In 2022, the Rotary Club of Madison distributed more than \$218,000 to over 40 local nonprofits promoting Rotary's mission of "Service Above Self" who embrace access, fairness, inclusiveness and diversity.

JustDane's "Drive to Succeed" program is a powerful example of a program providing hope to young people facing significant barriers to success. In collaboration with Operation Fresh Start, "Drive to Succeed" works with young people ages of 16 and 21 who have been involved with the justice system. The program provides eight months of intensive programming, case management and mentoring with the goal of strengthening family relationships, improving social interactions and increasing employment opportunities.

Drive to Succeed helps these youth overcome the two highest barriers to employment: attaining their high school diploma, or GED equivalent, and obtaining a driver's license at a time when driving without a license is among the most common entry points to the criminal justice system.

Linda Ketcham, JustDane Executive Director, described a Drive to Succeed participant on the autism spectrum who lacked a high school diploma and a driver's license and was caught breaking into cars. "Thanks to a dedicated mentor, assistance with his license and diploma, and no further involvement with the legal system, this young man has a bright future," she said. "Rotarians should feel proud knowing that their support has helped offer those with seemingly insurmountable barriers a lifetime of opportunity."



CONNECT. GROW. SERVE.

2 South Carroll Street, Ste. 255  
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## JOIN US FOR LUNCH

Our club meets each Wednesday at the Park Hotel on the Capitol Square from noon until 1:05 pm to enjoy lunch, connect with fellow members, and hear from engaging guest speakers.

Upcoming speakers are:

**NOVEMBER 16** – Professor Barry Burden,  
UW–Madison, Department of Political Science.  
Topic: Post Election Analysis

**NOVEMBER 30** – Niraj Nijhawan, MD. Topic:  
Brain Science Discoveries to Boost Resilience  
and Character

**DECEMBER 7** – Ja' Malik, Artistic Director.  
Topic: Future of the Madison Ballet

**Contact the Rotary Club of Madison office  
to reserve your spot! 608-255-9164**

## CONNECT FOR GOOD

The Rotary Club of Madison empowers you to Connect, Grow and Serve.

We exist to help our members form new, positive and diverse relationships, grow personally and professionally while working to make our community and world better places to live for all.

Learn through our weekly speakers on timely topics. Volunteer to help with community service projects. Meet other leaders from a broad cross section of our community. Enrich yourself culturally and socially, personally and professionally.

**For more information and to join, visit [rotarymadison.org](http://rotarymadison.org)**

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*Rotary Club of Madison commits to be diverse, equitable and inclusive. We will achieve this through recruitment, education, member engagement and community service.*